

Consultation Report

Budget 2019/20

1.0 Introduction

A consultation was undertaken with residents, Town and Parish Councils, businesses and hard to reach groups to gain their views in respect of the Council's 2019/20 Budget.

Methodology

The consultation took place between 17 January 2019 and 12 February 2019, and was promoted widely in the following ways:

- A media release was issued to local newspapers to promote the consultation.
- Paper copies of the questionnaire and posters were made available at the Council's Community Access Points and Magna Vitae run Leisure Centres.
- A homepage banner was placed on the Council's website to draw attention to the consultation together with an on-line questionnaire and relevant documents relating to the draft Budget 2019/20.
- Details of the consultation were emailed to all District Councillors, Town and Parish Councils and to groups that represent those individuals with the characteristics identified in the Equality Act.
- Notification of the launch date for the consultation was communicated through the e-business brief to businesses.
- Social media activity was ongoing throughout the consultation period.
- Details of the consultation were included in the East Lindsey e-messenger

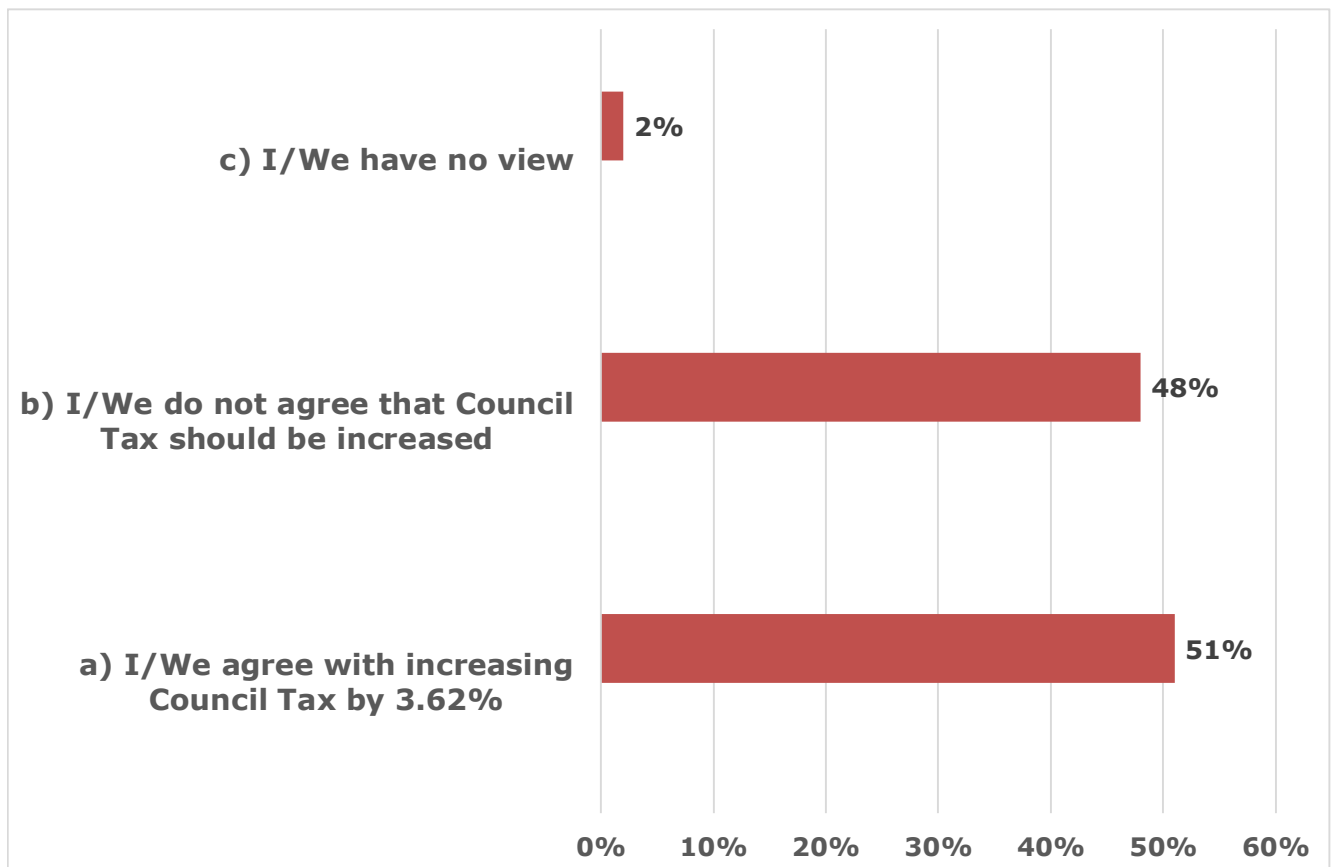
A total of 63 responses were received; 60 electronic and 3 paper copies. A significant increase of 34 responses when compared to the previous budget consultation exercise.

2.0 Detailed Information

2.1. 98% of all respondents responding to the consultation responded as 'A Resident', with the remaining 2% responding as 'A Business'.

Council Tax

2.2. All respondents were advised that East Lindsey District Council's current Council Tax levy is one of the lowest in the country and that the Government is allowing the Council to put its Council Tax up by a maximum of £5 next year (based on a Band D property). The Council is therefore proposing a £4.95p (3.62%) increase for 2019/20 – an extra 9.5p per week for a Band D property. All respondents were asked their views on this proposal. The chart below shows that 51% of all respondents agreed with increasing Council Tax by 3.62%.



2.3. Those respondents that did not agree with the proposed increase in Council Tax were asked why they did not agree. The main theme emerging is that respondents considered they were not getting value for money and did not see the benefits from paying more Council Tax. A full list of their views are detailed below:

- Services should be improved first. More police on the streets to show the money is being raised wisely. Tax should be not unilateral but aimed at those who can afford more.

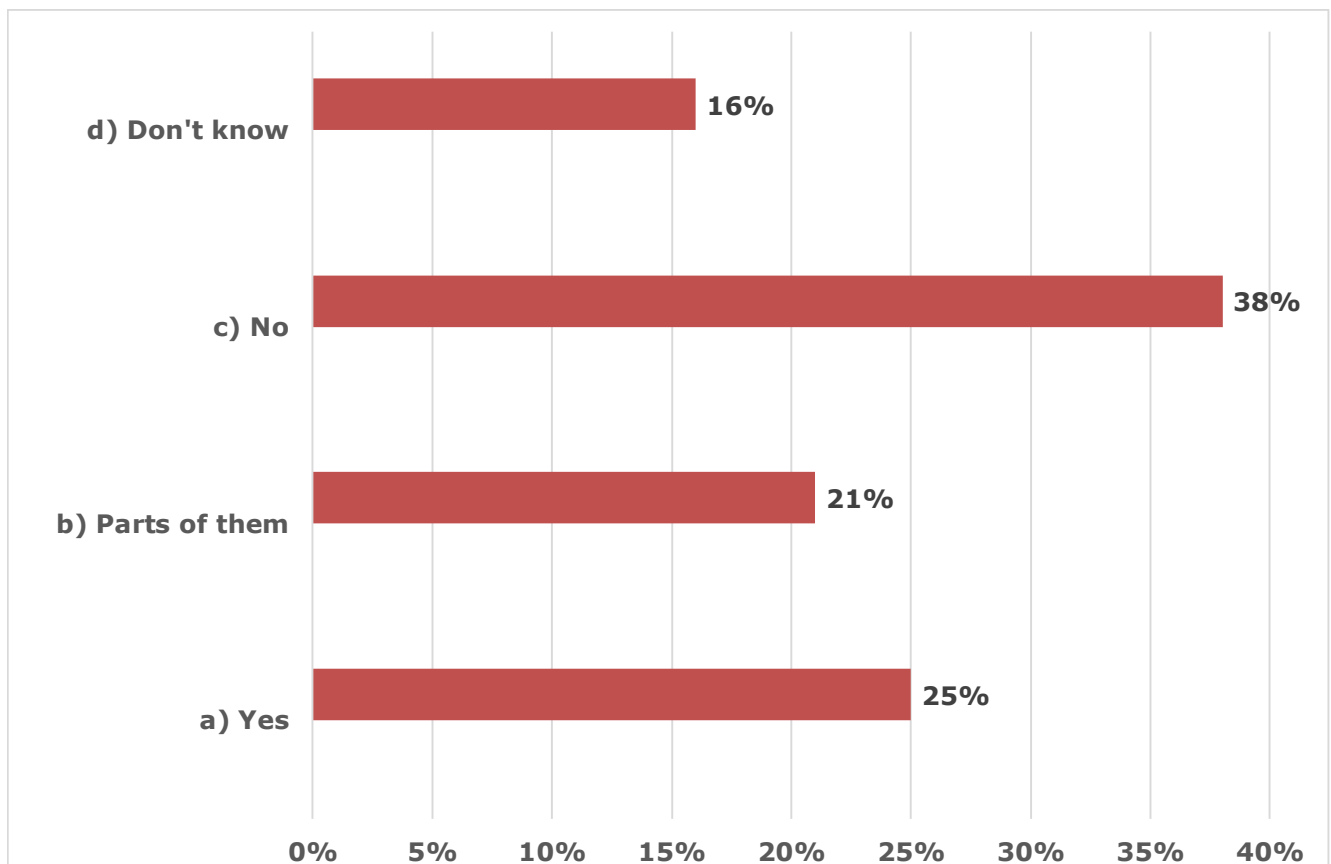
- Incomes are reducing as more employers use changes to rolls and responsibilities within restructures to lower wage bills on top of pay freezes in this LOW PAY County. Households are struggling more and more.
- I do not agree with paying more and getting less. My pay rise is less than inflation.
- Council Tax increased by 100% during the Labour years and has still increased year by year. There are too many increases added to this Tax including LCC, ELDC, Skegness TC, Police and now Social Care Tax. There is no added value from these increases. Many residents would love to see these percentage increase in their income. There should be more effort to reduce duplication in services by different council bodies serving the same areas. For example, street lighting has 3 separate areas of service in Skegness.
- We do not see the benefits of your cost savings each year we are paying more and more it's about time we felt the benefit
- A named Councillor and his good wife for me need to be listened to and their ideas implemented for the whole county of Lincolnshire. Personally, I want to see the Councils have stalls, pop up kitchens at all the events in the county selling tea and coffee promoting Lincolnshire produce and undercutting everyone else and invite these student chefs to devise a menu and run them as part of their courses. Make a profit to add to the coffers instead of milking the public all the time in taxes. All Councillors need to be proactive to make money for the Taxpayers and justify their money from the Council. As for charity donations; each Cllr should have their own individual good cause and make sure at least 75p in every pound raised goes to the end user; the person or persons needing the help. Stop the new builds by private companies actually build Council owned properties to increase the wealth and stop them being sold off. Cllrs should never toe the party line; it's a cop out.
- Because of declining local facilities
- Even though I own my property outright I struggle to pay my Council Tax. The Council Tax support system is not clear and easy to understand and the department is very unhelpful. Green waste collection now has to be paid for on top of refuse collection further adding to the cost of services that used to be included in the Council Tax. My Council Tax also funds the Parish Council who won't even respond to my requests for them to cut back their trees which overhang my garden from the adjoining park. Where on earth will I find the money to fund this increase? I certainly won't see any benefit from this increase.
- We are in a higher band than D
- We pay too much Council Tax as it is and the services are getting less and less. You need to stop paying out massive expenses and start using our money better
- Current cost is far too high as it is
- The current system is totally unfair as residents properties were based on a 1992 valuation, and as you know a lot of properties have been extended since. We, for example, extended our property before 1992 and were put into band E afterwards. All our neighbours have extended since and are still on the old band D. A valuation of all properties would bring in greater revenue for the Council and would stop this unfair system at present
- You say you have no money yet you can spend £250,000 on something that does not benefit the residence of the area. Why spend our money on a VIP bar for the Embassy Theatre. What good does it do for me as a resident if I don't go to the theatre as I am not obviously a VIP. That money could be

used better for tourism projects especially as the Embassy is part of Magna Vitae which was supposed to support itself and also as you have just given them money to refurbish the pool and gym facilities. Why?

- Most elderly people, particularly those who are retired, have a fixed income usually tied to the cost of living. Increases above the cost of living have the most adverse effect on such people. Council Tax increases should be capped at no more than cost of living increases. Councils should become more efficient, particularly in procurement of goods and services. Every effort should be made to improve services within current costs.
- I think more could be done to find internal savings without hitting Council Tax payers for another year.
- ELDC continues to oversee the degradation of our area whilst continuing to boast about its low Council Tax. A radical re-think is required.
- Services are almost non-existent and continue to be cut. Paying more for getting less.
- Refuse collection and sorting is appalling. Crime and speeding within the village is on the rise and we will see little change until more police patrols are supplied. The only way I can make a comment is to disagree with the Council Tax question above. This is a badly structured survey.
- We need investment by our Government.
- It costs enough as it is.
- We pay for increase in tax don't see anything for this. Lights in the village are poor and also turned off. Bus There is no bus service on Sunday and Holton Le Clay is a big village.
- Because we pay enough for a sub-par service from the Council already.
- Because we pay enough
- We don't get a lot from the Local Authority. We are the poor relations just on the boarder. We don't even have street lights! We don't get an awful lot from LCC. Stop paying for refugees and we will have more money for us!
- Whilst I appreciate it's not a massive increase, when we have to pay extra for green bin collections, the street lights being turned off and the trees which get cut down do not get replaced, it seems ridiculous to ask for more money.
- I firmly believe that too much Council Tax goes to fund red tape/ pensions that should not be subsidised by the Taxpayer in this manner and not enough goes to improving services.
- It's becoming unaffordable
- I don't feel we are getting value for money now.
- Have had a good look at the consultation; it is quite amazing that £798,000 is contributed each year towards a pension deficit; if I am reading the presentation of the figures correctly. Is this simply out of Council monies or is any deducted from employees to cover this short fall? This is yet another example of why people work at councils. Easy jobs, easy money, and no idea what hard work is?

Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

2.4. All respondents were asked if they agreed with the draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy. The chart below shows that 38% of all respondents 'do not agree' with the draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.



2.5. All respondents were asked if they had any comments to make in respect of the draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy. A number of comments were made; the main theme emerging is that it was not easy for a lay person to understand and a simplified version would have been more suitable. A full list of comments received are detailed below:

- Business Rates in Mablethorpe which is a deprived area should be reduced to allow young people and businesses to set up businesses and not leave the town and existing businesses.
- It is true to say that I do not like any increases in Tax of any kind as we simply pay too much overall. A person in full time work has to work until mid-afternoon on Wednesday to pay all their Taxes. Only after that do they earn money for themselves and their family. Any Tax increase makes us work longer for no return. Realistically Local Authority charges do go up so the amount requested this year is small. However, as a percentage it is greater than the average pay rise percentage and it would be nice to keep the percentage rise at least in line with wage rises i.e. 1 to 2 percent.
- See previous comments and use a named Councillor and his wife's ideas and implement them.
- A simple more basic version should have been available alongside the more detailed one. I didn't have the time nor the inclination to go through the documents (although I did start to).

- Again nothing is spent in our area, yet we pay for Skegness Horncastle and Louth to get improvements.
- Emphasis on moving to a sustainable future financial model is commendable!
- As usual you make decisions without consulting the local residents. Yes I know that you are doing this now, but surely it should have been done a long time before now, and also not everybody is online. Are we going to get a refund for the things that you are giving to Skegness Town Council? We should not be paying twice for these areas.
- Agree in principle.
- The decision not to build housing on the coastal area because of fears of flooding and the proximity of an AONB means unsustainable housing is being built in Louth. Therefore more monies will have to be found for infrastructure in Louth to support the amount of new housing.
- Although I agree with the proposed rate of increase I believe that the increase needs to be higher if the authority wishes to provide better than minimal services to its, elderly, disabled, and socially disadvantaged residents.
- I cannot find any indication that ELDC's Budget takes into account: 1. The loss of income from the assets associated with Tower Gardens transfer to Skegness Town Council. 2. The cost of ELDC demolishing the Tower Gardens Pavilion in Skegness. 3. The increase in professional fees charged to monitor the movement of assets from ELDC to Skegness Town Council. 4. The reduction in ELDC's expenditure due to a reduction of grass cutting in Skegness. 5. A system whereby ELDC compensates Skegness Town Council for taking over ELDC's responsibilities for grass cutting.
- Strengthen Drainage Board accountability
- Not easy for a lay person to understand in depth. Asking preferences to spend on either this or that would be easier for a lay person.
- With no bungalow development permitted along the coastal strip, the area is stagnating. ELDC is squeezed between a reducing government grant and the needs of the area.
- Do you seriously expect an uninitiated member of the public to trawl through a 36 page document and understand it?
- A serious need to encourage firms to locate here, that will not happen until we improve the road infrastructure.
- I've not seen it
- The Council should consider raising Council Tax by more than is proposed. Having one of the lowest Council Tax rates in the country is not something to be proud of, given the significant needs of the area.
- I think proposing a 4.95% p.a. Council Tax rise for the next five years is out of touch. I can't see where anyone will get that type of pay increase. Furthermore I don't believe we will see any noticeable improvement in services.
- Not to increase Council Tax.
- More help needed for rural businesses and villages.
- Reduce pension contributions. As a person who has run finances in many businesses, one thing becomes very obvious, when employing people who have 'worked' at Councils; it's clear they have no idea what hard work is. When you don't have to earn it, you care less how it's spent.

2.6. All respondents were given the opportunity to provide any ideas that they might have that could help the Council to reduce its expenditure or increase its income to support local services. A full list of ideas are detailed below:

- Pay freezes for top earners over £30k and expenses looked at. Energy saving in Council buildings, cars, van contracts, outsourced contracts in general.
- Reduce paper waste - photocopying etc. can cost quite a lot; this should be limited. Reduce stationery costs. Reduce ineffective staff.
- Investment in Skegness; more investment generates more visitors this then makes more income for the Council.
- Louth Town Council's precept is once again due to rise above inflation in fact by a whopping 29%. This massive increase is we are told to finance grass cutting and street lighting that are provided by LCC, which we have already paid for, so in fact, we are charged twice. I believe it's time that the Louth Town Council was abolished and it's small portfolio of works it carries out are brought back under the umbrella of ELDC thus boosting ELDC coffers by £370,000 + p.a. Of course there would be certain expenses but a lot of savings in the long run for both the rate payer and ELDC, not forgetting the property portfolio that could be sold off.
- Scrap the extortionate cost of providing a Traveller Site in East Lindsey, especially as the Council paid £100,000.00 for a site that was worth only £8,000 and this is before any development costs are taken into consideration.
- Should be an increase in the charges applied to Fixed Penalties for Fly tipping and all cases should go to court to send out a clear message to offenders with a large fine and with all costs being recovered, i.e. clearing the rubbish, administration and legal costs.
- I collect scrap metals in our village which I sort and sell for funds for our village school. When I visit the waste site at Louth I am dismayed by the amount of materials (metals, equipment, furniture etc.) that people leave that could have value not only as scrap but also in many cases for their original use. I occasionally visit the Grimsby site (which in general organisation and helpfulness of staff is abysmal compared to Louth), but they do retain potential re-usable items and hold periodic auctions. These are used to raise funds for charity. Could ELDC operate a similar scheme to raise funds for charity or even for ELDC funds?
- Budgeting should not be difficult. Use the Council money in the first place to pay for what the Council has to provide by law. What is left can be used for pet projects and not the other way round. If there is no money left for pet projects and handouts/bloated staffing then so be it. The Council should only provide what it lawfully has to. I do not know what you can do to stop Skegness Town Council taking a multi-million pound loan out for a white elephant project on Tower Gardens. The loan is to be paid back over 30 years from year on year rate increases. This financially suicidal project will do the exact opposite of reducing expenditure. If the Town Council budgeted as my above comments they would not be in this mess handing over a massive debt to a new Council for the first time in its history.
- Many Local Authorities have invested in commercial property. Yes this is somewhat disliked because they are outside of the district. However, because they're outside, the Council will mitigate risks such as the owner threatening to cut jobs or wanting rent reductions. The income retained from this can then be injected back into services.
- Integration of Council services covering the same area.

- Ask a named Councillor and his wife
- Monetise assets reasonably and not brash handily such as Huttoft car terrace; a prize gem for making money. Allow an hours free parking but add a charge for longer. This will encourage people staying all day to contribute to the area and also cause others to leave after the hour allowing space for others during the very busy season.
- Stop giving Councillors massive expenses.
- Opportunity to promote and operate sustainability hubs selling environmentally friendly products, holding training courses on organic food growing, repair classes, maker courses etc. and a general meeting / wellbeing area. Membership fee, course fees, sale of goods, food, drinks generating a reasonable profit.
- Cut costs of translating Council documents/leaflets in multiple languages. Discontinue the housing and care of foreign nationals. Actively seek out and prosecute the increasing number of fly tippers thus offsetting the increasing cost of clearing up. Cut Councillors expenses and increasing wage bills of unnecessary staff.
- Cut the money that is paid to Councillors. Also what about the cost of Manby and Skegness Town Hall? Stop wasting money on projects for Magna Vitae when they are supposed to be on their own. Spend money on tourism projects like the coach park in Skegness. How can we expect coach operators to bring people into our town and be charged for parking their coaches and we give them nothing? At one time we had a cafe and toilets but now what do we have; cheap, broken plastic shelters and no facilities, and you say that you do a lot to help tourism in the area; what a joke.
- Make management more accountable for efficiency of staff. A combination of 'stick and carrot', has usually proved to work well when applied correctly.
- Steady maintenance of property will reduce costs in the long term.
- A number of shops in Louth have remained empty for a long period. Innovative ways need to be found to bring these shops back into economic use. The Christmas Market at Louth was a huge success and brought thousands into the town. The provision of additional parking could generate more money for ELDC.
- Thousands of visitors come to this area annually. Their static homes mass along coastal fields. In the "season" their vehicles suffocate the roads, and our health facilities are overwhelmed. Some income, other than car parking fees (these afflict local residents equally) need to be found to ensure that local residents are not made to feel that they are in some way secondary to the tourism "industry"
- ELDC wasn't deemed to be necessary prior to the Local Government Act 1972. In these times of austerity, the most significant way in which ELDC could save money would be to return to the pre-1972 model of Local Government; a time when we had Local Government to deal with local problems.
- Devolve services to lower tiers.
- ELDC can reduce its expenditure to zero by orchestrating a return to pre-1973 Council organisation i.e. a removal of the middle tier leaving Parish and County Councils.
- Cut down on executive wages, provide a decent service and people will be happy to pay a bit more, but don't expect support for higher tax whilst cutting services. Fix the pot holes and adequately light streets (yes I know that's LCC, but government is government to the layman.) and I would be happy for you increase the Tax.

- It's not a case of reducing costs, it's about making better use of the existing resources and not wasting money on wooden play areas around the 8 acres.
- Connect the A18 from the A180 to Louth with a bypass or upgrading of the A18, then let's see investors pour in along with thousands of holidaymakers from the north and the west of the country.
- Don't have your worker's working bank holidays or Weekends.
- Increasing income should be easy. Offer the residents more opportunity to help with schemes. Turn the street lights back on and reduce the crime rate and pressure on police services.
- Have you considered lease hire of refuse vehicles rather than outright purchase?
- No more refugees
- Increase Council Tax above current.
- Decrease the pension contribution as this is far in excess of what people get in the private sector. If employees want more in their fund let them increase their contributions via a salary sacrifice scheme which benefits both employee and the employer (this will reduce your Tax and liability)
- More speed cameras on major roads, with fines funding local villages. Eco lighting. Stop wasting money on flower beds in Skegness.
- Reduce pension contributions vastly. Work harder!

2.7. All respondents were advised that whilst capital resources are limited, the Council is keen to invest what resources it does have available to improve the local economy. With this in mind, all respondents were asked how they believe capital resources should be used to achieve this objective. The main themes emerging are the need for better infrastructure, investment in local businesses, and revitalising small towns would help to generate more tourism. A full list of all respondents comments are listed below:

- Reduce business rates half for deprived towns like Mablethorpe to attract business or we will become a ghost town and crime will increase.
- Council should maintain properties and gain revenue from good working tenants. Invest in a good transport system. Invest in local businesses so they get a good return to invest in services.
- Increasing access to the county by road improvements would help the overall economy; new industry will follow and build to economic viability of the whole county.
- Making Skegness look more desirable; more floral and light displays, interactive water fountains.
- The Councillors Charity Award Fund, which I believe to be £3000 p.a. should be abolished, as I believe these funds are far better and more fairly allocated when carried out by committees. It also prevents waste.
- Focus on promotion of tourism and support for improving the coastal commercial properties to upgrade the whole resort.
- The economy is improved by the business sector. The Council is useless at it. Please, Please, Please stay out of the local economy.
- Our roads are in a bad way and could get worse this winter so I believe we should reserve as much as possible to resurface the roads and not just patch up with a bit of tarmac here and there. I also think that in the last 12 months some roads have been re-surfaced that did not really need doing, whilst other roads that did need doing were left in a poor state.
- In a time of austerity the Council should look into investments to save measures rather than "pet projects" that nobody would have an interest in.

- Revitalise small towns like Mablethorpe with tourism. The town needs to be lifted up to Skegness and Louth levels of funding in events whereas instead it has been very consistently reduced. The better the areas out of season tourism, the stronger the economy and less empty shops. In addition, the Council should take a more involved approach to large private developments proposed in the area instead of a checklist of yes/no. Any private development proposals should be scrutinised by the Council for their legitimacy and then nurtured into becoming reality.
- To encourage more tourism.
- Help for start-up companies; financial and business guidance.
- Leisure industry needs investment. We are blessed with an abundance of natural resources that can be utilised.
- Sort out the coach park in Skegness to give our visitors basics like a cafe and toilets, and with the café, the coach drivers should get free meals and drinks.
- Should already be employing staff who have the experience, knowledge and expertise to achieve this. It takes someone with imagination to find alternative uses for existing capital items, particularly buildings. Of course, sale is one possibility but this should be a last resort. Cash investments should be made as if it were management's own money, with a careful low risk attitude combined with achieving highest possible returns, just as the reader of this comment would probably do with their own money (if they had any to invest). It takes 'work' and grown up thinking to do this but it can be done!
- By extreme careful measures.
- Help small towns improve their "look" to try to make them more attractive to tourists.
- A considerable sum has already been spent on the feasibility report for the Danelaw Multi-User path. A budget needs to be identified to remove impediments to moving this project forward. It can be done in stages and some like the Louth Navigation Towpath could be progressed far easier than other parts of the path. This would link into the Mablethorpe to Grimsby Coastal path and initiatives already under way by Cycle England,
- See comment to Section 6.
- ELDC is currently failing to even maintain the assets that it inherited e.g. Sutton on Sea Colonnade. These assets should be returned to the care of their local communities.
- Have free parking in some areas on certain days to encourage people to shop, speculate to accumulate.
- Commuting police. Focus groups with clout and remove some of the die hard in local office.
- Infrastructure
- Invest further in business and local entertainment. Provide the kids with more youth facilities and charge for attendance and events to bring more income back into the Council.
- Establish electric vehicle charge stations at strategically sited car parks.
- To invest in better street lighting in Holton le clay
- Support for small rural businesses.

2.8. All respondents were given the opportunity to provide any other comments; a full list of these are detailed below:

- Look at your budget and see what is working and what is not. Look at what you have done with Magna Vitae Sports and Leisure; set up trusts and apply for grants to look at ways of attracting Tax relief for the Council.
- You could set up a Skegness in bloom committee and also a Christmas light committee. This has been effective in other Councils like Stratford upon Avon and raises revenue to put on the displays.
- Louth Town Councils precept is once again due to rise above inflation in fact by a whopping 29%. This massive increase is we are told to finance grass cutting and street lighting that are provided by LCC which we already have paid for, so in fact, we are charged twice. I believe it's time that the Louth Town Council was abolished and it's small portfolio of works it carries out are brought back under the umbrella of ELDC thus boosting ELDC coffers by £370,000 + p.a. Of course there would be certain expenses but a lot of savings in the long run for both the rate payer and ELDC not forgetting the property portfolio that could be sold off.
- Pleased to note the increases on empty property Taxes.
- Please just provide the services you have to by law.
- Lobby the government more forcefully to the wealth inequality experienced in this region (the 4th poorest region in all Northern Europe). The Council can only do so much but needs government infrastructure changes to this area if it is to become most cost efficient and viable.
- Thanks for the opportunity to comment. Well done on the efforts to date in a difficult time!
- Far too much money is spent policing and clearing up the mess of increasingly lawless areas like Skegness. These costs should be recouped and totally funded by higher on the spot fines, Tourist Taxes and the establishments responsible for the ever increasing loutish and anti-social behaviour footing the bill.
- Cut out restructuring in the Council and avoid huge pay-offs to staff who simply move to another Council.
- Good quality management is the key. Time servers are a waste of resources and block junior staff from advancing. They also set a bad example to those under them.
- This 'consultation' appears very limited, and is nothing other than in a couple of boxes asking for comments. The papers don't go down to the nitty gritty of detailed spending on which as a resident I may have a comment on as to whether in my opinion such expenditure is valid or not or we should reduce X and increase Y.
- If ELDC intends to increase its income from commercial activities, it will inevitably compete for the 'tourist pound' with the very businesses whose business rates it will rely on. I regard ELDC as the biggest threat to our business.

- This consultation is so well hidden, I doubt very much that many residents know of its existence, and if they do, I doubt they could find it. I was specifically pointed towards it, in its death throes.
- Stop wasting time and money on the pointless road works to relay surfaces that have no pot holes and focus more on the areas that do need help.
- Please put the lights back on in the villages.
- To source a wheelie bin; Franchise. To clean and sanitise bins like is operated in Grimsby. Perfect for elderly working people - I miss this. I was willing to pay for bin to be cleaned but no franchise to access and I feel people would make use of this.
- Being more relaxed with planning would bring in much more income plus residents would be happier that they could build on their own land. Fining all people caught breeding dogs without a licence would bring in massive revenue.

3.0. Respondent Profile

3.1. 61% of all respondents were male, with the remaining 39% being female.

3.2 19% of all respondents considered they had a disability.

3.3. The chart below shows that the most popular age groups to respond to the consultation were the '45 to 64' and 'Over 65' age groups, as was the case when the previous consultation exercise was undertaken.

